



# CARBON MONOXIDE FACT SHEET



---

## What is it?

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is a gas that you cannot see or smell. It is produced whenever something is burned incompletely, or when something is burned in a closed-in area. It is toxic to all humans and animals. It is also the most commonly inhaled poisonous substance and is a common indoor air pollutant.

## Where can it be formed in and around a house?

- Incorrectly adjusted or vented furnace may spread carbon monoxide throughout the house
- Water heaters with improperly aligned or obstructed exhaust pipes
- Gas stoves that are left on for long periods of time or used as heaters
- Fireplaces that are blocked by debris
- Clothes dryers with disconnected hoses
- Space heaters that are used in unvented rooms
- Charcoal grills that are used inside as heaters or in garages or unvented areas
- Automobiles that are allowed to idle in closed garages

## What are the health effects of over-exposure to carbon monoxide?

- Headaches
- Sleepiness
- Dizziness
- Confusion
- Death

## What can you do to protect yourself from carbon monoxide poisoning where you live?

- Install carbon monoxide detectors to detect the presence of high levels of carbon monoxide in your home.
- Never use space heaters or gas stoves in unvented rooms.
- Never use gas stoves or charcoal grills inside as heaters.
- Never stay in a closed garage with a car that is running.
- Ask your parents to check water heater, clothes dryer, and furnace connections, and have a professional check the fireplace once a year.



Bureau of Air Quality



PROMOTE PROTECT PROSPER  
South Carolina Department of Health  
and Environmental Control